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## Thailand

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### Biotechnology Update

#### Report Categories:

Biotechnology

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#### Report Highlights:

TH0034. Policy development in the area of agricultural biotechnology is proceeding slowly. A draft of biosafety law and final draft field trial procedure guidelines remain under review. A recently government-appointed environmental task force has proposed to include biotechnology along with a series of industrial projects, as activity posing potential danger to the community's well-being. This situation has created concern among biotech stakeholders who are attempting to overturn this proposal.

**Biosafety Law:** A draft of the biosafety law remains under review by the Office of the Council of State. Representatives from Office of Natural Resources and Environmental Policy and Planning (ONEP), Department of Agriculture (DOA) and National Center for Genetic Engineering and Biotechnology (BIOTEC) are providing additional information and comments as needed. According to a DOA senior expert on agricultural biotechnology, the Council is now reviewing the second-round final draft. The final draft will be submitted to the Cabinet after the third-round review. The law should be endorsed by the end 2010. Biosafety legislation has been under review by the Office of the Council of State since the Cabinet approved the draft Biosafety Law in principle in January 2008. See GAIN reports [TH8144](#) “Status of the Thai Biosafety Law”, and [TH9111](#) “Agricultural Biotechnology Annual”.

**Field Trial Procedures:** Final draft field trial procedure guidelines are under review by DOA and BIOTEC. Dr. Banpot Napompetch, the advisor to the Biosafety Law Committee at DOA, is presently preparing field trial guidelines on papaya and tomatoes. A draft could be ready in March and is expected to be submitted to the Ag Minister prior to submission to the Cabinet for final approval. A decision to proceed with developing field trial procedures was made by the Cabinet in December 2007. See GAIN report [TH8003](#), “Cabinet to Allow Biotech Field Trials with Restrictive Measures”.

**Task Force on the Environment:** A government-appointed special-task committee on the environment has been formed. The committee has proposed that industrial projects or activities that intend to use biotechnology should be included in a list that classifies this type of project as potentially dangerous to a community’s environmental quality, its natural resources, and public health. Projects on the list could be disqualified from being operational if a proposed regulation, containing the aforementioned stipulation, is submitted to the Cabinet for approval. BIOTEC and biotechnology researchers are concerned that this regulation would be another barrier to adopting agricultural biotechnology in Thailand. In response, BIOTEC has officially opposed the move.